

The Message and The Man

[5] because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, [6] which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, [7] just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf [8] and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 1:5-8 ESV

Epaphras was a humble man of God. He was not afraid to ask for help. He did the best thing he could've done at the time. He travelled 1,000 miles to go see his mentor, Paul. He found Paul in Rome and told him about the church in Colossae. He told Paul how they were growing and doing well, but he also told them how the church was in danger of being swept away by this new false teaching concerning Jesus.

The Colossians were under threat of new religious teachings telling them that they did not have all they need to be full and complete. But God, through the writing of Paul, wanted to assure the Colossians that they already had all they needed.

GOD'S WORD GIVES GOD'S PEOPLE CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAS PROVIDED ALL THEY NEED.

What do God's people have that they need? What did the Colossians need, and already have?

God gave 2 provisions to the Colossians, and today we're going to look at those in detail.

Provision #1 - God had already provided the Colossians with the pure message of the gospel. **1:5-6**

In verses 5 and 6, Paul dives into a discussion about the gospel - the good news of Jesus dying on a cross for our sins and rising again so that whoever believes in Him guaranteed eternal life. The word gospel means good news, and Biblically, it is the good news about Jesus.

(Observation #1) - Paul mentions the gospel in verse 5, but he does not explain all the details of the gospel. Instead, he chooses to discuss the nature of the gospel and its world wide fruit bearing ministry.

Why doesn't He take the time to talk about the details of the gospel? He does this, I think, in order to demonstrate a confidence that the Colossian church already knew the details of the gospel. He trusted that Epaphras had already taught the pure, full, true message of the gospel.

(Observation #2) - Paul wrote about the nature of the pure gospel in order to remind the Colossian church had already been given full message of the gospel.

Paul brings up 8 facts about the nature of the gospel in just a very few words.

- (1) The gospel is a message of hope laid up in heaven for those whose faith is in Jesus. 1:5
- (2) The gospel is the message of truth - the word of truth. 1:5
- (3) The gospel is personal. 1:6
- (4) The gospel is universal, not local or ethnical. 1:6
- (5) The gospel produces fruit everywhere. 1:6
- (6) The gospel increases. 1:6
- (7) The gospel has power as it is preached. 1:6
- (8) The gospel is the message of God's grace in truth. 1:6

Have you believed in this pure gospel? Is this the gospel you have embraced?

Provision #2 - God had already provided the Colossians with a faithful man of God to teach them. **1:7-8**

Paul takes time in verses 7 and 8 to give his personal letter of recommendation and affirmation of Epaphras.

Paul offers 8 facts to affirm the credentials of Epaphras.

- (1) Epaphras was a teacher of truth. 1:7
- (2) Epaphras was beloved of Paul and his ministry companions. 1:7
- (3) Epaphras was a fellow of Paul and his ministry companions. 1:7
- (4) Epaphras was a servant with Paul of Christ. 1:7
- (5) Epaphras was faithful. 1:7
- (6) Epaphras was a minister of Christ. 1:7
- (7) Epaphras was a minister of Christ on behalf of the church in Colossae/on behalf of Paul. 1:7
- (8) Epaphras cared deeply about what was taking place in Colossae with the church. 1:8

Paul defends Epaphras strongly. He is a true teacher, a beloved fellow servant, a faithful minister of Jesus on our behalf and yours and he cares very deeply about you.

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